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directory

(1) A simulated file folder on disk. Programs and data for each application are typically kept in a separate directory (spreadsheets, word processing, etc.). Directories create the illusion of compartments, but are actually indexes to the files which may be scattered all over the disk. UNIX and DOS use the term directory, while the Mac and Windows use the term "folder."

(2) A database of users, hardware devices and applications in a network. See [DSML](#), [directory service](#) and [metadirectory](#).

(3) A search site on the Web that catalogs Web sites by subject and also manually indexes the site, providing a brief description of its content. Yahoo! is the most well-known directory site. See [Web search sites](#), [metasearch sites](#) and [Yahoo!](#).

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directory service

A directory of names, profile information and machine addresses of every user and resource on the network. It is used to manage user accounts and network permissions. When sent a user name, it returns the attributes of that individual, which may include a telephone number as well as an e-mail address. Directory services use highly specialized databases that are typically hierarchical in design and provide fast lookups. See [x.500](#), [LDAP](#), [naming service](#) and [ULS server](#).

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LDAP

(Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) A protocol used to access a directory listing. LDAP support is being implemented in Web browsers and e-mail programs, which can query an LDAP-compliant directory. It is expected that LDAP will provide a common method for searching e-mail addresses on the Internet, eventually leading to a global white pages. LDAP is a sibling protocol to HTTP and FTP and uses the ldap:// prefix in its URL.

LDAP is a simplified version of the DAP protocol, which is used to gain access to X.500 directories. It is easier to code the query in LDAP than in DAP, but LDAP is less comprehensive. For example, DAP can initiate searches on other servers if an address is not found, while LDAP cannot in its initial specification. See [DSML](#) and [ADSI](#).

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